



# MUSEOLOGIST india

*News-Letter*



### EDITORIAL

The majority of Indian museums are in Pathetic conditions, so are their staff. There has been no scientific planning and programming in the past with the result majority of museums are far away from their functions - which comprises (a)collection (b)documentation(c) classification (d)study and research(e)publications(f) dissemination of knowledge through well planned interpretative exhibitions and displays (g) ensuring of security and (h)protection and conservation . It is rather unnecessary on this occasion to enumerate and emphasize these.

The concept of museums as educational institutions and cultural centres has been gaining ground through out the world, and are looked upon with pride and admiration. But most of the museums

in India do not have facilities for such functions, perhaps because of lack of realization on the part of authorities, of the urgency and need of standardisation of museums, not to speak of paucity of funds, which is also equally a burning problem of our museums. It is therefore, necessary now to think in terms of national policy to tackle these nagging problems.

Moreover, our leading museologists are pre-occupied with their self interests that they sacrifice every other consideration of over all museum development. Museum development is restricted to few seminars and meetings, on the one hand, and to few museums on the other. All the privileges are enjoyed by limited number of museums with the result that there is a gross neglect of most of the museums. Each geographical region has its own specific cultural, social /  
/ natural and

scientific importance thus museums are important in each region, just like colleges and universities. Unlike colleges and universities museums have wide spectrum of functions for mass education. Therefore at the cost of developing few museums, the other regions should not be neglected. If the museums have to play an important role in mass education to societies, justice should be intended to each and every museum.

If we consider the present situation in the country of these vital organisations it has been found that museums usually occupy a low priority in the development schemes, thus, it <sup>is</sup> inevitable that there is no uniformity and standardisation in respect of status, staff, and financial assistance. Since museum work is a team work, minimum technical and administrative staff, proper status and adequate financial assistance is needed to

justify the functions and fulfil the desired objectives. The situation in some of the museums is pitiful as they are run by a curator, a clerk and a peon with meager financial assistance, adequate enough to draw their salaries. The understaff conditions, inadequate financial assistance are the main causes of ill functioning of our museums. There is an urgent need for greater co-operation from policy-makers in order to make adequate provisions for museum development in their schemes.

Since we museologist and professionals are responsible for promoting the museum movement a unity at national level is needed to promote such movement and to find justice for our neglected museums. During last MAI Conference, at Baroda, a band of museologist and professionals

felt a need to accelerate the general museums development in our country and to establish a common plat-form to discuss various related problems, with the result, "MUSEOLOGIST INDIA" has come up . This is then a unity which is formed to pose the problems and demand as well as help to find situations.

Being concern of all the professional and museologists, we hope that you will also join hands with us in order to promote such movement in this country for general public interest.

MUSEOLOGIST INDIA

Application form for membership:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name ( In block letters )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Museum position  
(If not employed in museum  
active connection, if any)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full Postal Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Qualifications

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

Nationality

Mother  
Tongue

\_\_\_\_\_  
Special subject  
with Museum field

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signature

Membership Fee:-

General member Rs. 20 (Rs. Twenty only)  
Voluntary contribution will be highly appreciated . Payment may be made by Postal Money orders payable to Satish Sadasivan, Museology Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda - 390002

Indian Museums and their ~~Basis~~ Basic Problems

We all know the 'museum' has shed its static nature and has become active with full of purposeful functions to perform. One need not to be reminded that the museums are no more a store house, a mere show piece, or a symbol of past glory; rather it is time for one and all to REALISE its real potentials as a source of unlimited knowledge, experiments, research and MEDIUM OF FIRST HAND EDUCATION. Positive thinking has made many western museums and museums of other developed countries to catch up with these modern functions and abide by them and justify 'museums' as an educational institutions and cultural centres. Unfortunately the picture painted by Indian museums are far from rosy, in fact, it cuts sorry figure. But Why? The possible

reasons may be briefly summed up as :

- a) Absence of realisation at Government and Popular level of the potentialities of a museum
- b) Irrational and inadequate distribution of Finance.
- c) Absence of trained staff at all levels, especially at the administrative level
- (a) Absence of Realisation of Museums as educational and cultural centres at Govt. & popular level

Through out the world Museums have come to be recognised as educational and cultural centres. Indian museums, are, however, not really recognised as belonging to this category, as can be seen from the condition in which museums in different states function. Museums in various states are under different departments, which have mostly nothing to do with them.

As they are educational institutions they must be brought under the department of education and culture and should be provided with separate directorate headed by a qualified and trained directors who will be also in a position to extend co-operation at Govt. level in outlining policies for general museum development under his control. The set-up in Gujarat may provide a befitting prototype on which lines the system may be standardised.

Secondly, general awareness and understanding of public about museums ~~xxxx~~ are very vague. They are hardly aware about the potentialities of the museums. There should be an extensive drive by the Govt. and professionals making use of mass media in order to popularise the museums and their functions.

(b) Irrational & inadequate distribution of finance:

Another reason for the poor state of Indian museums

is the paucity and irrational distribution of funds. Most of the museums are inadequately financed. Financial assistance given to these museums are just enough to draw the salaries of the employers. There is hardly any grants for publication, exhibitions, collections, conservation etc. Thus the desired out-put in terms of quality is out of context and that is the reason why museums in India have failed to change their Ajayeb Ghar image, till now in the public eyes. If we critically analyse Indian museums in terms of financial commitments, it can be seen that much less is spent on the whole of the Indian museum movement than one or two good museum in America or Europe. It is regrettable to note that there are only few museums in India that <sup>se</sup> can be regarded as atleast adequately financed and all other museums in country are

given step-daughter treatment. Financial flow in country is towards the development of few museums and they spend hundred times more than any regional museums. In a country, like India where the immensity of its population live in villages of different states, hence a proper scheme should be made in order to bring the existing museums to life and justify the needs at each region. In second and third ~~year~~, five-year plans central government had started giving financial assistance to different states for museum development. It was a welcome gesture, but unfortunately again these schemes were not fully followed up. It is now obligatory on the part of state and central governments to provide adequate financial assistance to the museums, so that the existing museums will be at par with western museums in their functions.

Another reason for the poor state of funds in Indian museums is due to lack of philanthropists and public benefactors with <sup>at</sup> red zeal for museums. Therefore, professionals should maintain cordial relations and contacts with such public benefactors so they can get donations and public endowments for the betterment of their museums. The outstanding example of Indian museum development at state level is from Gujarat. The Directorate of Gujarat State museums run nearly 13 district level museums with 1/3 of financial commitments as compared to a national level museum. Thus it can be inferred that financial assistance given to one national level museum will serve the purpose of running 31 museums in the country at the level of museums in Gujarat State. Thus, financial assistance is one of the problems that should be seriously considered

without any further delay.

(c) Absence of trained staff at all levels,  
especially at the administrative level:

Nobody can deny the fact that a basic training in museology is essential for museum personnel, but paradoxically those who have passed the museology courses are still unemployed, because of the passive attitude of the present day employer, and lack of a national policy to absorb only trained and qualified staff. An out right rejection of museologists and failure to recognise the value has left deep scar on many who got trained and forbades others from committing such mistake. The rejection of this course is only due to self interest of the museum authorities. As our present day museum authorities mostly have come to consolidate their positions through the usual painstaking process of promotions, will no doubt resist the

possibilities of newly trained persons getting absorbed at such levels.

On the one hand if we look to the survey conducted by late Krishna on 'Museum personnel in India', he rightly pointed out that most of the museums are understaffed and are mostly headed by untrained curators or directors, and on the other side the complaint at official level is that the training at university level in the subject is insufficient to serve all types of museums, because of lack of specializations that identifies with the museum collection. Such a simple problem can be got over by sending fresh appointees to the different institutions for training instead of stopping trained and qualified persons from entering in the profession. As it is widely agreed upon a museology training is important for museums personnels, thus museology should be made as an essential qualifications for ----

curatorial posts at all levels and those in service should be sent for training.

Another serious problem relating to staff in Indian museums is their low emoluments. Surprisingly the pay scale of a carpenter in National level museum is equal to the pay scale of some of the curators in different states, irrespective, of their double post graduations. If best of the talent is to be utilised for making museum movement in India a success, the scale of pay of the technical and administrative personnels must be revised, raised and standardised, uniformly all over the country. From time to time recommendations have been made but they have not to be taken seriously by the authorities.

These are some of the problems which have to be tackled without delay, if the standard of our museums has to be raised. (We request all our members to write about their own views on this movement their views would be published in order to stress the need to various state and central governments )

NEWS

At the MAI Conference:

During last MAI Conference at Baroda the "Museologist India" proposed following recommendations:

1) Evaluation of Previous Recommendations:

Every year during MAI conferences number of recommendations were put forwarded for the development of museums, but to utter misfortune none of these recommendations have been implemented or even remained unheard in the museum world, with this point in view we proposed this recommendations for the consideration.

2) Standarisation And Rational Distribution of Staff And Financial Assistance:

The members of the MAI unanimously agreed to this proposal. However, we have discussed this point repeatedly in our news letter.

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### 3) Museology As An Essential Qualification

This recommendation was also agreed by the house, but president, Shri O.P. Agrawal wanted to have dialogue between the professionals and trained museologist, before passing the recommendations. Shri O.P. Agrawal has agreed to have discussion on this subject with representatives of trained museologists somewhere in February 1982. The detailed discussion on this point will be informed through this news letter in near future.

### Wanted:

- ① Research Assistant: Qualification:  
M.A. (Archaeology) 3 years experience  
Age limit: - 30 yrs. Pay Scale: 500-900.
- ② Museum Assistant: Qualification: Graduation  
in Archaeology, Museum experience.  
Age Limit: - 28 yrs. Pay Scale: 260-540.

### Address:-

Applications on plain paper should be directed to the Registrar, Deccan College,

Pune-411 004 on or before 20/2/82.

CC-0. In Public Domain. UP State Museum, Hazratganj, Lucknow

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News letter for the development of Indian Museums:

Working Committee

- \* Kuldeep K.Bhan, Dept. of Archaeology, Baroda
  - \* Satish Sadashivan, Dept. of Museology, Baroda.
  - \* P.C.George, Dept. of Art History, Baroda.
  - Pramod Ganpate, Crafts Museum, New Delhi.
  - \* Raj Rattan Puri Goswami, Lady Wilson Museum,  
Dharnpur, Gujarat.
  - V.P.Ranjit, Crafts Museum, New Delhi
  - Suprya Sarkar, National Natural History Museum,  
N. Delhi
  - \* Ramesh Thakker, Baroda Museum, BARODA.
  - Indra Nair, AFMC Museum, Puna.
  - \* Local Members
- 18th Feb.1982.

ms: EDUCATIVE QUALITIES OF THE MUSEUM:

The visual method of exhibition conveys to the majority of adult and of children a greater number of facts in less time than of these were expressed by words, written or spoken. The visual and tactile qualities of specimens, their "reality" make an emotional appeal to people which seems to increase their sensitivity and capacity to assimilate information of considerable complexity and subtility.

2/bi  
A. In addition to imparting facts to people, the museum offers opportunities to challenge them to active co-operation in the process of learning and to stimulate in them certain attitudes such as the faculty of observation logical thinking responsibility and imagination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

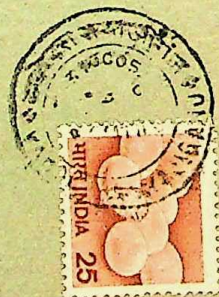
Members of 'Museologist India' are very thankful to Smt. Smita Bakshi for <sup>her</sup> ten her co-operation for establishing a information bureau at crafts museum, New Delhi. Shri Ganpati and V.P. Ranjit will assist her in development. This bureau will provide information to members on various scholarship and job opportunities offered by various agencies to the trained museologists. Confirmation and the address of this information bureau will be soon declared through news paper.

Members of 'Museologist India' are than various professionals for their encouragement during the conference for developing such common plat-form.

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BOOK-POST  
TO  
Mr. S. D. Trivedi  
Director of Govt.  
Museum  
.....IHANSI (M.P.)



From :-  
**MUSEOLOGIST INDIA**

C/o Satish Sadashivan,  
Dept. of Museology  
Faculty of Fine Arts,  
BARODA-390 002.